

# I Am Offering this Poem

**By Jimmy Santiago Baca**

I am offering this poem to you,  
since I have nothing else to give.  
Keep it like a warm coat  
when winter comes to cover you,  
or like a pair of thick socks  
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,  
so it is a pot full of yellow corn  
to warm your belly in winter,  
it is a scarf for your head, to wear  
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure this as you would  
if you were lost, needing direction,  
in the wilderness life becomes when mature;  
and in the corner of your drawer,  
tucked away like a cabin or hogan  
in dense trees, come knocking,  
and I will answer, give you directions,  
and let you warm yourself by this fire,  
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe

I love you,

It's all I have to give,  
and all anyone needs to live,  
and to go on living inside,  
when the world outside  
no longer cares if you live or die;  
remember,

I love you.

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Born in Santa Fe of Chicano and Apache descent, Jimmy Santiago Baca was abandoned by his parents and at thirteen ran away from the orphanage where his grandmother put him. He was convicted on drug charges in 1973 and spent five years in prison. There he learned to read and began writing poetry. His verse novel, *Martin and Meditations on the South Valley*, received the American Book Award in 1989. In addition to seven books of poetry, he has published memoirs, essays, stories, and a movie screenplay—*Bound by Honor*, released in 1993.

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